

## **APPENDIX B: QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWEES**

*For the Prospective Tenant:*

1. What is your company's business? What products or services does it provide?
2. Is your company interested in mill properties?
3. If so, what would you use mill space for?
4. In what area or areas of the state is your company most interested in locating?
5. Is your company interested in rehabilitating a mill building or in knocking it down and using the land to build a brand new facility? Which do you feel generally is a better option?
6. If rehabilitating the mill building, what size building would your company be interested in? What amount of square footage would you need?
7. Is your company looking for only first floor space or would you occupy multiple floors?
8. Would your company be interested in upper floor space if first floor space were unavailable?
9. What is attractive about these mill sites? What interests your company about them?
10. What concerns do you have about these mill sites? What type of risk or liability do they present to your company?
11. Are the tax incentives presently offered to investors by the state through programs such as the Enterprise Zone Program and the R.I. Mill Building and Economic Revitalization Act enough to make up for the liabilities that come with these mill buildings? Are they enough to attract investors in the private sector?
12. If not, how much in tax incentives should the state offer to investors to really attract business to these sites in spite of the investment risks they present?
13. Aside from tax incentives, what could the state do to decrease the amount of risk involved in investing in these mills and make them more marketable? How could they attract more industry and business to these mill sites?

14. Is there too much “red tape” involved in getting a mill to be certified for rehabilitation and reuse? If so, how could the state make the process easier?

*For the Private Sector Developer (Located in Northern Rhode Island):*

1. How much mill building land is there in northern Rhode Island? What is the average size of mill sites?

2. Are the mill sites concentrated in specific areas or are they dispersed throughout northern Rhode Island?

3. In what areas of northern Rhode Island do the mill buildings have good transportation access? What kinds of transportation?

4. Are there any areas in northern Rhode Island where mill sites lack basic infrastructure, such as water or sewer systems?

5. Are there any areas where mills lack utilities, such as electricity or telephone wiring?

6. Who would be responsible for the cost of adding basic infrastructure and/or utilities?

7. Is there the possibility to wire the mill buildings in this area with fiber optics and/or other wiring for telecommunications and electronic commerce? If so, who would be responsible for the costs?

8. In what areas of northern Rhode Island do mill sites contain physical constraints that would affect development? What kind of constraints? In what areas of northern Rhode Island are physical constraints more of a problem?

9. Are any of these mill sites “brownfields” with possible contamination that would have to be cleaned up before redevelopment? If so, who would be responsible for the cost of cleanup?

10. Are there any other environmental concerns that present themselves in this area?

11. How energy efficient are these buildings? Could they be improved to better utilize energy for future industrial use?

12. Where are the “prime” mill sites in northern Rhode Island (the ones with good infrastructure, transportation, and no physiographic constraints? What areas have the most hope for redevelopment and reuse of mill buildings?

13. What is the market like for these mill buildings? What kinds of businesses and industries seem most interested in settling in these sites? Are companies willing to invest money into rehabilitating and reusing these mill buildings?

14. What uses of these mill buildings would be most beneficial to the economy of northern Rhode Island and the economy of the state as a whole?

15. How much of an impact would redevelopment and reuse of these mills have in helping the economy of northern Rhode Island? Does it depend on the nature of the reuse?

16. Have there been any past or current renovations of mill buildings in this area? If so, what were the mills used for? How successful were these attempts?

17. What are the best options for redevelopment of these sites? Should they be used for industry, office space, business incubators, or mixed use, or are there better options such as assisted living, recreation, or historic preservation? Does it depend on the location?

18. Is it worthwhile to invest in the redevelopment of mill buildings to support future industrial growth in northern Rhode Island?

*For the Real Estate Representative:*

1. Where in Rhode Island are the “prime” mill building sites with the most potential for investment and redevelopment? Are they concentrated in certain areas?

2. Is there a good amount of vacant “prime” or near-“prime” mill building area in Rhode Island? (“Prime” in this context denotes a site with good or fairly good transportation access, availability of infrastructure and utilities, limited physiographic constraints, etc.; essentially a construction/renovation-ready site.)

3. When selling mill sites, do real estate agents deal more with developers or actual companies and business?

4. What is the market like for old, vacant mill buildings in Rhode Island? Does the market differ for mill buildings in different areas of the state?

5. What kinds of companies or businesses seem most interested in these mill sites and are willing to invest money in them?

6. What factors, if any, might attract companies or developers to invest in vacant mill sites?

7. What concerns do companies have about investing money into these mills?

8. Are the tax incentives presently offered to investors by the state through programs such as the Enterprise Zone Program and the R.I. Mill Building and Economic Revitalization Act enough to make up for the liabilities that come with these mill buildings? Are they enough to attract investors in the private sector?

9. If not, how much in tax incentives should the state offer to investors to really attract business to these sites in spite of the risks they present?

10. Aside from tax incentives, how else can the state help in making these mill buildings more marketable? What changes or improvements need to be made to attract companies to these sites?

11. Is there a demand for industrial land in Rhode Island? If so, what kind of industries are interested? Is there an adequate supply to meet this demand?

12. What are these industries looking for in a site?

13. How feasible is it to attract industries to old, vacant mill sites? Is there an adequate supply of mill buildings in Rhode Island that could be marketed for industrial use?

14. Is it more feasible to attract non-industrial uses, such as residential, assisted living, retail/commercial? If so, what kind of companies?

15. Is there a demand for office space in the Providence area? Is there adequate supply to meet this demand?

16. How feasible is it to attract companies to vacant mill buildings in Providence for use as office space?

17. How marketable are the upper floors of mill buildings that are only partially occupied? What kinds of companies might be interested in upper floor space?

18. In the past few years, have there been any trends in the types of companies investing money in mill sites in Rhode Island? If so, what kind of trends? Do you expect these trends to continue in the future?

19. Given the trends of investment in vacant mill buildings, what seems to be the best or most viable reuse of these buildings?

20. Are there any specific companies or developers that we could talk with to get their perspective on mill structures?

*For the Mill Owner:*

1. How many mill buildings do you own?
2. Where is it (are they) located?
3. How long have you owned this (these) building(s)?
4. Do you own any industrial or business operations in the mill(s) or do you just lease out space? If you own an operation in the mill(s), what kind of operation?
5. When you bought the (a) mill site, were you offered tax incentives from the state? If so, did these incentives help attract you to this site? Were the tax incentives sufficient, considering the risk of investment and the cost of rehabilitation for the building?
6. What attracted you to that mill building?
7. What concerns did you have about investing in that mill site, if any?
8. Have you done any major redevelopment of that site? If so, what did this include?
9. Is that mill building vacant, partially occupied, or fully occupied?

*If Vacant:*

10. Has anybody shown any interest in leasing some space in your mill? If so, who?
11. What concerns, if any, do people have about leasing space in your mill?
12. What kind of tenants are you hoping to attract to your mill?
13. What kind of setup are you hoping for (multi-occupancy, single occupancy)?

*If Partially Occupied:*

14. What kind(s) of tenant(s) is (are) leasing space in your building now?
15. How much space is still vacant? What areas of the mill building are vacant (upper floors, lower floors, etc.)?
16. How efficiently is the occupied space being used? Could the space be used more efficiently?

17. Has anyone shown interest in leasing out some of your vacant space? If so, who?
18. What kinds of tenants are you hoping to attract to your vacant mill space?
19. How successful has your mill reuse been?

*If Fully Occupied:*

20. What kind of setup does your mill have (multi-occupancy, single occupancy)?
21. What kind(s) of tenant(s) is (are) leasing space in your mill?
22. How efficiently is your mill space being used? Could it be used more efficiently?
23. Was it difficult to find tenants? If so, what concerns did people seem to have about leasing space in your mill?
24. How successful has your mill reuse been?
25. From your experience, is there a good market for mill space? Are people interested in locating in mill sites?
26. From your experience, what kinds of companies or individuals seem most interested in locating in rehabilitated mill space? Has there been a trend?
27. What can the state do to improve its policy of promoting the reuse of mill buildings in Rhode Island? How can the state make these sites more marketable and increase investment in vacant mill buildings?

*For the City or Town Planner:*

1. How much “mill building” land is there in your area (city or town)? Is there vacant mill space? If so, how much mill space is vacant? What is the average size of these vacant mills?
2. Are the mill buildings concentrated in specific areas or are they dispersed throughout the city (town)?
3. Do these mill buildings have good transportation access? If so, what type(s) of transportation can be accommodated?

4. Are there any mill buildings lacking basic infrastructure (i.e., water supply, sewer system)? If so, who would be responsible for the cost of adding this infrastructure or re-establishing connections?

5. Are there any mills lacking utilities such as electricity? If so, who would be responsible for the cost of adding the required utilities?

6. Is there the possibility to wire these mills with fiber optics and/or other wiring for telecommunications and electronic commerce? If so, who would be responsible for the cost of wiring the buildings?

7. Do the mill building areas have any physical constraints that would affect development?

8. If industries were to use the mill buildings, would they have easy access to a qualified workforce?

9. Are any of these mill sites “brownfields” with possible contamination that would have to be cleaned up before redevelopment would be possible? If so, what kind of contamination? Who would be responsible for the cost of the cleanup?

10. How energy efficient are these mill buildings? Could they be improved to better utilize energy for future industrial use?

11. What is the market like for these mill sites? What kinds of companies are most interested in these sites?

12. How feasible is it to attract developers to rehabilitate mill sites for future industrial use? Is there a good number of mill buildings in this area for which industrial redevelopment is possible?

13. For certain mill buildings, is non-industrial redevelopment more feasible? If so, what kind of redevelopment – retail, office space, residential, or assisted living?

14. Are there mill buildings in this area that would be better off demolished and made into greenfields or parks?

15. Have there been any past attempts to redevelop and reuse any of these mill buildings? If so, what were the mills used for? How successful were these attempts?

16. Are there any current attempts to redevelop these mill buildings? If so, what are they being turned into? How are these projects coming along?

17. What would be the best or most beneficial reuse options in general? Should they be used for industry, office space, business incubators, possibly mixed use, or are there better options such as assisted living, recreation, or historic preservation?

18. Is it worthwhile for the state to continue its policy of promoting the rehabilitation and reuse of mill buildings? If so, how can this policy be better implemented?

19. Are there any mills that one could visit that are truly representative of mill buildings in this area?

20. Which mill sites do you have the most hope for?

21. Are there any obstacles not yet mentioned that stand in the way of redeveloping mill buildings in this area?

*For the State Enterprise Zone/Mill Building Program Manager:*

1. Where are the greater concentrations of mill buildings (particularly vacant ones) in Rhode Island located?

2. Where are the “prime” mill sites in Rhode Island (the ones with good infrastructure, transportation, and no physiographic constraints)? What areas have the most potential for redevelopment and reuse?

3. What is the market like for these mill buildings? What kinds of businesses and industries seem most interested in settling in these sites?

4. What uses of these mill buildings would be most beneficial to our economy?

5. How much of an impact would redevelopment and reuse of these mills have on the economy? Does it depend on the nature of the reuse?

6. How successful has past redevelopment of mill sites in Rhode Island been?

7. Is there any mill redevelopment currently going on? What are the mills being redeveloped into? How are these projects coming along?

8. What, in general, seems to be the best use of these old mills? Do they have more hope of being used for industrial or for commercial use? Or perhaps some other use?

9. Are there other obstacles that stand in the way of mill building reuse? Do these obstacles cause potential investors and industries to turn away?



10. How do the tax incentives offered to companies and banks investing in mill buildings relate to the money paid by taxpayers?

11. Are the tax incentives offered to companies enough to attract them to these mill sites? If not, how can the state improve these incentives to attract companies to invest in these sites?

12. Will the cost to state government of the mill rehab/reuse tax incentives be balanced by the amount of tax revenue gained through reuse? Does this depend on the industry or business that moves into the mill building?

13. How much of the cost for redevelopment or environmental cleanup of mill sites is covered by government programs? Is this cost balanced by tax revenues gained through reuse?

14. Is it worthwhile to rehabilitate old mill buildings as a means of preserving enough industrial land to sustain our economy?